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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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January 3, 1975

The Honorable
William E. Colby
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Mr. Colby:

You are doubtless familiar with Section 32 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 which imposes restrictions on intelligence activities and requires, under certain circumstances, the submission of reports to the Committees on Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs. With the President's signature on December 30, 1974, that act has become law. It would seem appropriate in view of the circumstances which led to the enactment of this law that the Foreign Relations Committee begin as soon as possible to oversee its implementation.

I believe that the proper first step is to ensure compliance with the basic requirement of the new law. In this connection, the Committee wishes to establish that all Central Intelligence Agency operations "other than activities intended solely for obtaining necessary intelligence" were terminated effective December 30, 1974. We assume that if this is not the case, the Committee will be notified forthwith and the requisite report submitted. I would like your specific comments on this point at the earliest opportunity.

It seems essential that there be established at the outset a clear understanding between the Agency and the Committee as to the scope of the law. In order that this may be accomplished without delay, I request the Agency to make an exhaustive review of its current programs and activities for the purpose of identifying to the Committee any such activities which may conceivably be viewed as within the scope of the law. If, as is undoubtedly the case, there are some activities which appear to be within a gray area, it would be best for these to be discussed with the Committee without delay.

In addition to undertaking this initial review, we should reach agreement on the form and procedures to be employed for the submission of the reports required under the Act. The Agency will doubtless wish

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to ensure that the information provided will be accorded the proper security handling. Members of the Committee, of course, share this concern and at the same time wish to ensure that the information provided is sufficient to enable them to make informed judgments regarding the appropriateness of any activities not solely related to the gathering of necessary intelligence. I stress this point because given the doubts which have recently been raised concerning the propriety of some of the Agency's activities, the Committee has a particularly serious responsibility to the Senate to verify compliance with the requirements of the new Act.

Over the years the Foreign Relations Committee has generally been very well served by the CIA. Members have often praised the objectivity of the Agency's presentations. Our country must have an intelligence collection and analysis capability of the highest caliber. I am sure that the CIA can continue to provide such a capability in the future just as it has in the past. It is, however, essential that public and Congressional confidence in the Agency, now shaken by recent disclosures, be restored as promptly as possible. I am confident that you share this view of the importance of your Agency's cooperation in achieving this result.

Sincerely,


John Sparkman
Acting Chairman